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With the (northern hemisphere) summer winding down and the summer ANA convention over we move into autumn which is traditionally an exciting auction season. I look forward to reviewing upcoming auctions.

In this edition we have a couple of interesting reviews of sorts. At one time I collected the so-called "Columbia Farthings" and tried my best to figure them out. In my research of these enigmatic pieces I discovered that nobody else really knew what they were either. This year I pulled out my Columbia Farthings and set my mind to bringing closure [the end of my research] to this long unsettled arena within my collections even if it meant not learning of their origin. I reviewed my notes which include references to "The Columbia Farthing" by Melvin Fuld (*The Numismatist*, May 1969 in the section "The Token Collector's Page"). Earlier articles in the *Numismatist*; "The Columbia Farthings" by John F. Jones, August 1937 and "Comments in the Mysterious Columbia Farthing-Size Token," February 1948. I also found my correspondence with Granvyl Hulse (NI librarian at the time [1986]) concerning his article "The Columbia 'Farthing'" in the December 1985 edition of the NI bulletin. By using the internet I renewed my quest for information and it lead me to Paul Withers in England. Paul & Bente Withers provide a history of these tokens in their forthcoming book *The Token Book 2 Unofficial Farthings and small Advertising Tokens, 1820-1901*. With their kind permission we offer the Columbia Farthing section within these pages.

Continued on p. 154...

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‘COLUMBIA’ Farthings and Associated Pieces

Paul Withers

Much has been written about these pieces as they have been seen as mysterious and problematic. Mystery almost always gives rise to speculation, and in this case speculation has varied from imaginative, to the improbable, to the ludicrous.

North Americans and Canadians, having a short numismatic history and nothing comparable to that of Europe have latched onto the fact that they say COLUMBIA on them, with some alacrity. Alas, the base fact is that until fairly recently none of these pieces have ever been found there, or South America. To further deny American origin, a look at the figure on the reverse: whether you describe her as Justice, or Britannia, there is no denying that the shield by her side is clearly identifiable as the union flag.

A connection to Colombia? This arose, allegedly, because an inexperienced, dyslexic, minor employee of an English museum once upon a time answered a query to someone in the US, saying that the piece was a quartillo from Colombia in South America. However, there may well be a connection with Colombia to which we shall return a little later.

Where are they found? There can be little doubt that they are English. Worn and corroded examples have been found in English soil by metal detectorists. The type, in general, is locally common and they turn up in quantity. They are not quite as common as 1806 halfpennies, but nearly so; in the 1960s and 1970s there were always a dozen or two in our junk boxes at coin fairs.

When were they made? I am informed that there is an example in the British Museum that has a ticket giving the acquisition date of 1830. Phil Mernick gave a talk to the Token Corresponding Society Annual Congress in 2009 having found that the arch publicist, and issuer of ‘unofficial farthings’, Dr Eady, was credited with using these, though we agree with Phil that the pieces described were not those of Dr Eady, but must have been ‘Columbia’ farthings. This equates well with an accession date of 1830, and the fact that one of the reverses is found muled with the obverse of a George IV (1820-30) coronation medallion.

It is evident, having seen the amount of these coins around, and the state of the dies, which were used until they were worn flat, and used even when they were rusted, that they were struck in large numbers. The coins themselves saw considerable use, evidenced by the large numbers that turn up in a worn state. This would seem to show that they were not gambling counters, which do not usually show heavy wear.

The portrait has been said to bear a similarity to that of Simón Bolívar, the leader of the group of South American nations, known as ‘Gran Colombia’, fighting for freedom from the domination of Imperial Spain. He died in December 1830, after being president from 1819-1830. It is possible that these pieces may have been issued, in England, in commemoration of him, or in the hope that the same might happen here and the rule of the house of Hanover might cease; certainly George IV was a most unpopular monarch.

One possible cause of confusion is that included with the Columbia pieces is a piece on which the portrait is looking in the other direction and the reverse bears a standing figure of Justice, not a seated figure of Justice/Britannia. Its only similarity is its

fabric, size and probable dating. David Sealy pointed out, in *TCSB* Vol 2 No 8, July, 1975, that the prototype for this is most likely to be a political medallet *BHM* 1453, page 351, issued to celebrate the resignation of the Duke of Wellington and Robert Peel, on the 16th November, 1830. From a comparison of the two pieces it is likely that he is right about this and the portrait of the quasi-Columbia farthing might be Wellington.

This, and an eighth piece, suggested by Bryce Neilson, are included here because that too belongs as much as any other.

Some people, not knowing what they are, have been attracted to some of the wilder suggestions, not helped by the fact that the pieces themselves have male portraits on them, some of them not very well executed, who could resemble anybody.

It has been suggested that the portraits look like presidents of the USA, specifically Zachary Taylor, 12th president, who died in 1850 whilst less than two years into his term of office; and James Polk, 11th president. Aside from the fact that these two are far too late to come into the picture, they might superficially resemble the portraits, but no more than other badly executed male portraits might. For example, look at the undated penny token of Ireland that was credited to Daniel O'Connell which only gets that appellation because it has the legend *IRELANDS ADVOCATE*, when quite clearly it is George IV, complete with laurel wreath, modelled on the Pistrucci head.

A Scandinavian connection has been suggested because of the superficial similarity to the Mercurius daler of 1718, but that may be discounted, both on grounds of date, and fabric. Why do the groups look alike? The answer is probably that just as regular coins and tokens were imitated and counterfeited, then so were the illegal ones, which all tokens issued after 1817 were. Some of these are imitations of imitations, possibly for the same customer by a different manufacturer, or die engraver.

Without doubt, the tokens are part of the 'unofficial farthing' series, with or without a political connection. The forces of reform, both political and Republican, may well have promoted them, but there is no more powerful a force than making money, and as a late, old friend of mine, who had been a tax inspector, used to say, "To find the motive, seek ye the profits", and if you can make money and spread your message at the same time, then so much the better.

To return to the coins themselves.

Examining the die linkages of the pieces shows that there are six discrete and different groups, one much larger than the others, two smaller groups, and three single die pairings, one of which links to the coronation medallet.

The first and largest group with seven obverse and four reverse dies may be identified not only because members of the groups mule with each other, but because of the method of die manufacture, which included the use of a series of dots to mark out the outline of the design before it was engraved, an unusual practice.

Obverses

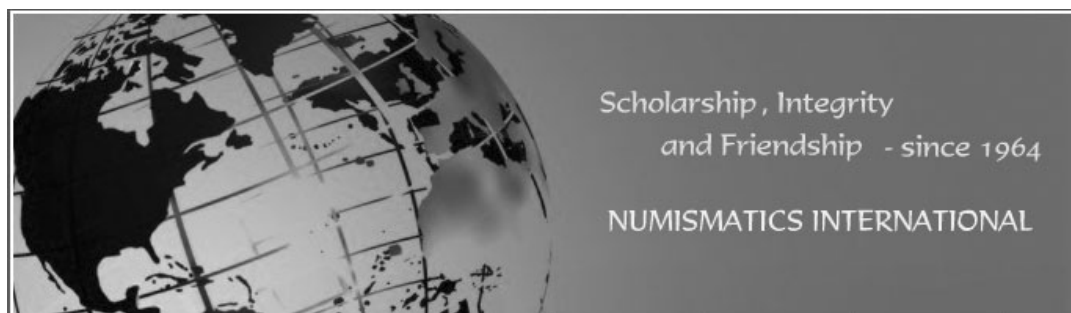
1. COLUMBIA above head. Long pointed truncation. No dots. Front of hair between M and B, a line from C to A goes through center of his eye. Back of his head is under L. Four rolls of curls on top of head.

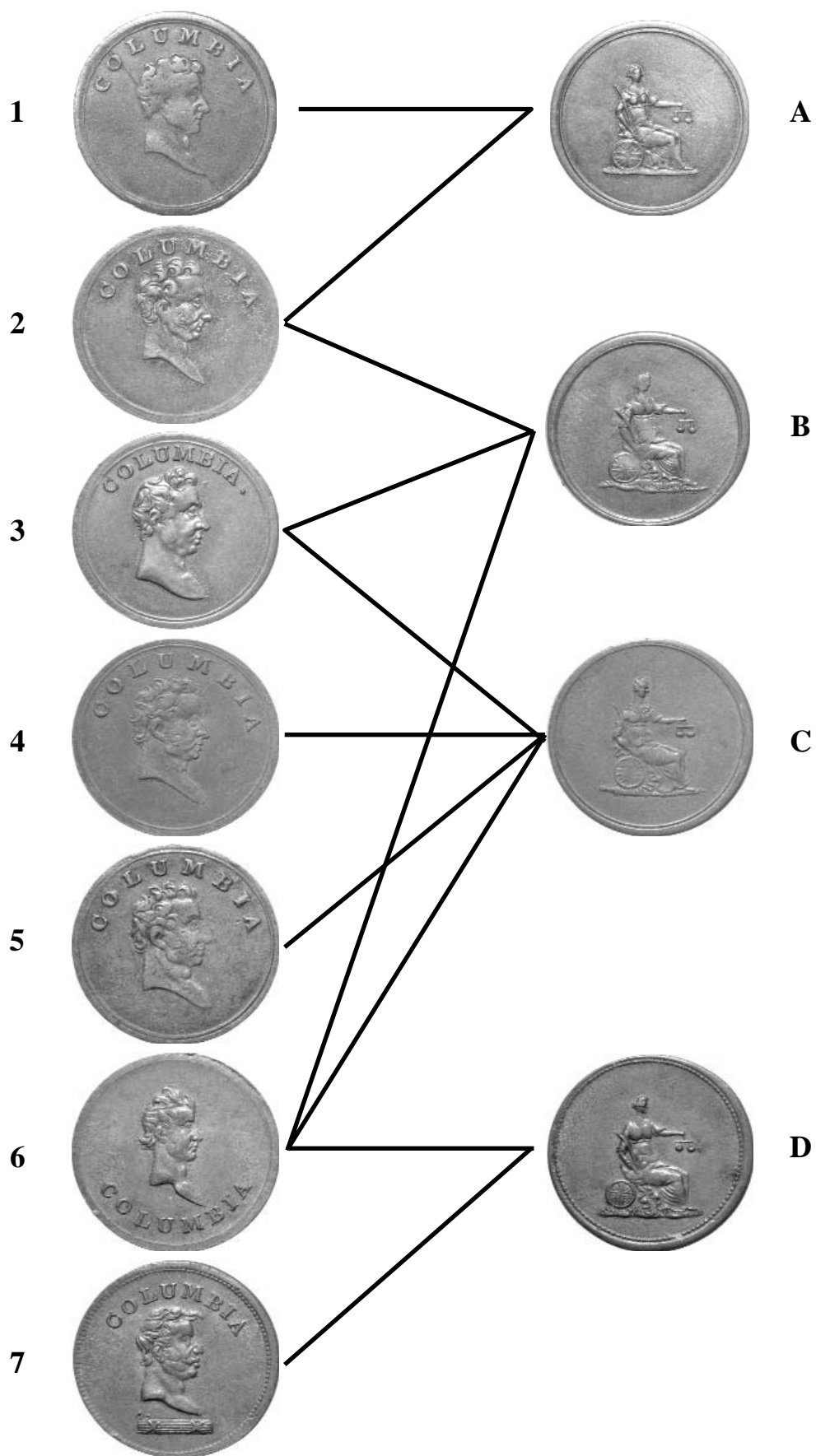
- 2 COLUMBIA above head. Long pointed truncation. No dots. Four rolls of curls on top of head very close to the letters. The front curl is below M A line from C to A goes below center of his eye.
- 3 COLUMBIA . above head. Dots outline portrait. Rounded truncation. High bunch of four curls.
- 4 COLUMBIA above head. Dots outline portrait, a line from C to A goes below his eye.
- 5 COLUMBIA above head. Dots outline portrait, a line from C to A goes below his eye. A larger and more pronounced adam's apple and the back of neck points slightly downwards rather than outwards.
- 6 COLUMBIA below head. Dots outline portrait.
- 7 COLUMBIA above, fasces below head. Dots outline portrait which has a curling moustache.

We are indebted to Markus Molenda for pointing out that obverse 3 also occurs as a blocked die without the stop.

Reverses

- A No dots. Top of palm level with bottom of neck. Elbows visible. Two loops of drapery above shield behind her arm. St. George's cross of shield is voided.
- B Dots outline the figure and the ground. Tip of palm a little below the shoulder. One fold of drapery above shield behind her arm. Arm holding scales straight, no elbow showing. St. George's cross of shield has raised central lines.
- C Dots outline the figure and the ground. The hand of Justice almost touches the rim of the shield. Three loops of drapery above shield behind her arm not touching the shield. Tip of the palm level with the top of her neck. Bottom right quarter of shield has central line in St Andrew's cross.
- D A very few dots outline the figure and the ground. Hand well away from the shield. Palm low, halfway down the upper arm. St. George's cross of shield has raised central lines. One fold to drapery behind arm.





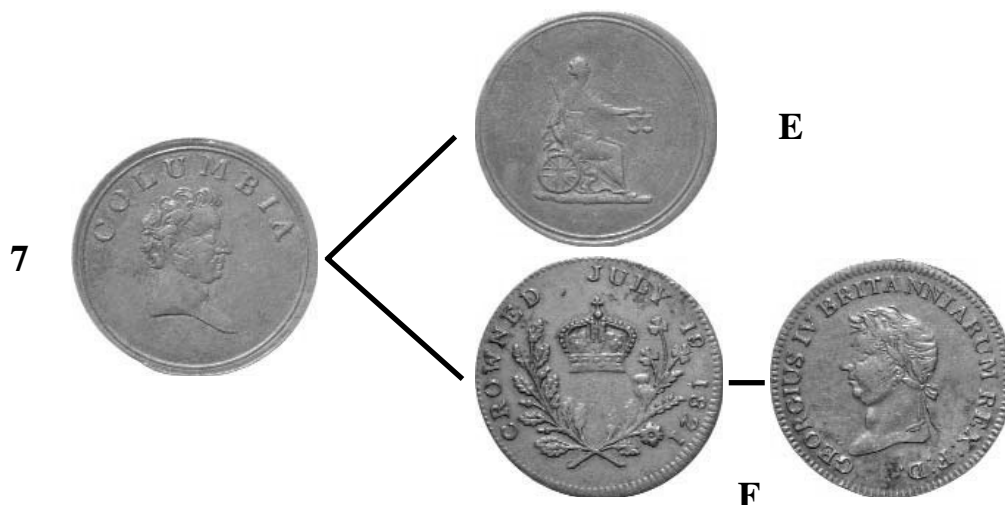
The second group (for the sake of convenience) consists of a single pair of dies, the obverse of which is also found paired with the reverse of a coronation medalet of George IV, 1821 (F).

Obverse

- 8 COLUMBIA above head, a line from C to A goes through the bag under his eye. Bump on nose. Raised lines in field in several places around portrait.

Reverse

- E Hand touches rim of shield. Tip of palm level with chin. Raised lines in field around figure. Tidy short grass on ground.



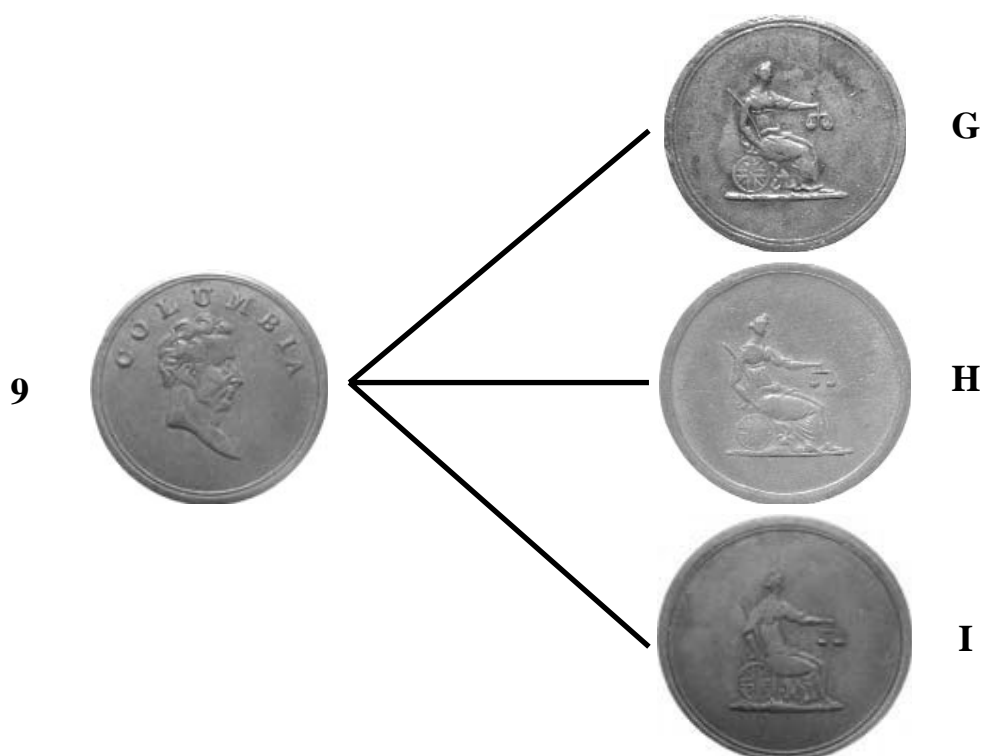
The third group consists of one obverse and three reverse dies.

Obverse

- 9 COLUMBIA above head, a line from C to A goes just below his eye. Front of hair under first half of M, M double-entered.

Reverses

- G Hair high at the front. Hand does not touch shield. Tip of palm level with bottom of neck. Single thick line to hem of dress, clear of ground. High ground line.
- H Hair high at the front. Hand does not touch shield. Tip of palm level with bottom of neck. Double line to hem of dress, rests on ground. Low ground line.
- I Hair high at the front. Hand touches shield. Very little drapery behind hand. Tip of palm level with bottom of neck. Much grass under shield and under hem of dress. Short, high ground line.



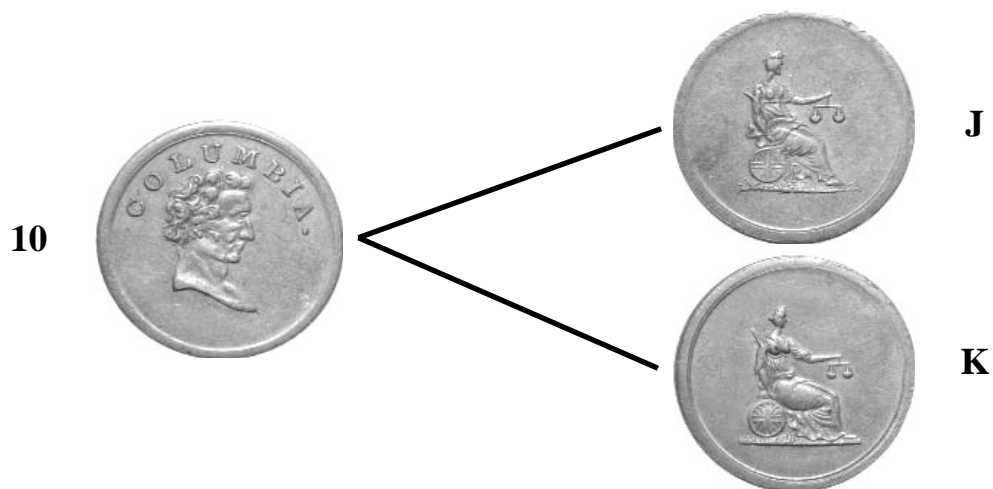
The fourth group has one obverse, two reverses.

Obverse

- 10 COLUMBIA . above head. Three curls, all in line, at top of head; a line from C to pellet goes through middle of nose.

Reverses

- J Long grass growing in all directions, left end of ground line curls downwards. Short palm, its tip level with hand which points upwards. Much drapery behind arm.
- K Grass all in one direction. Hand touches rim of shield. Tip of palm to top of neck. Very little drapery behind arm.



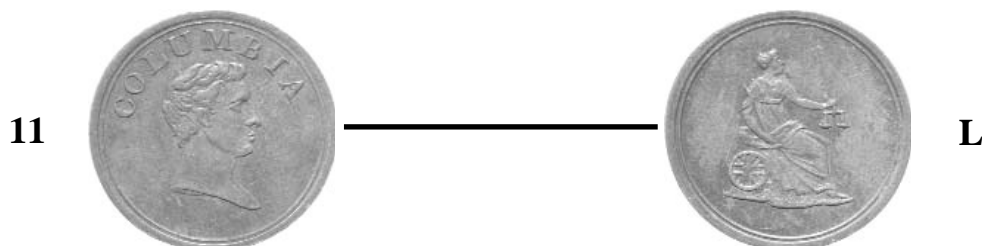
Fifth group, single pair of dies.

Obverse

- 11 COLUMBIA above young head, hair not very curly, a line from C to A goes through center of eye. Rounded front of truncation.

Reverse

- L Folds of drapery do not touch shield. Fat face and head. Short palm, tip level with shoulder. Wide ground in three curves to base, with grass all in one direction. Wide St George's cross.



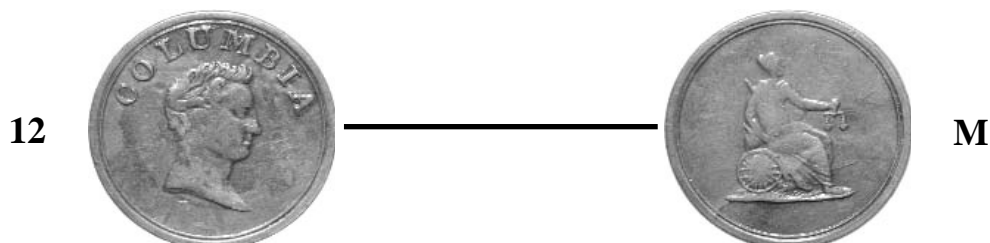
Sixth group, single pair of dies.

Obverse

- 12 COLUMBIA above head, hair mostly curves upwards and slightly backwards. Nose almost straight down from forehead.

Reverse

- M Triangle of drapery behind arm. Hair in pronounced bun at back of head. Tip of palm close to shoulder. Her foot very pronounced. Scale pan very close to her knee.



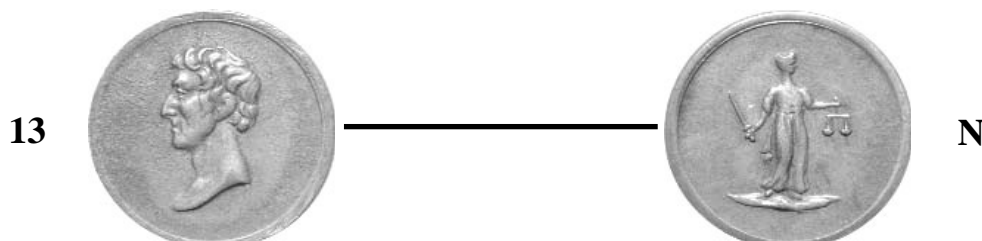
Seventh group, single pair of dies.

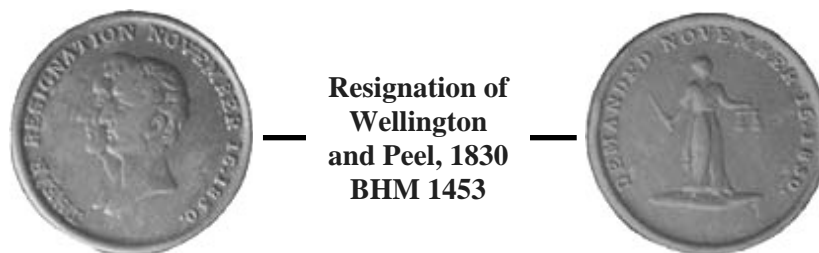
Obverse

- 13 No legend, head left.

Reverse

- N Justice standing, holding sword and scales.





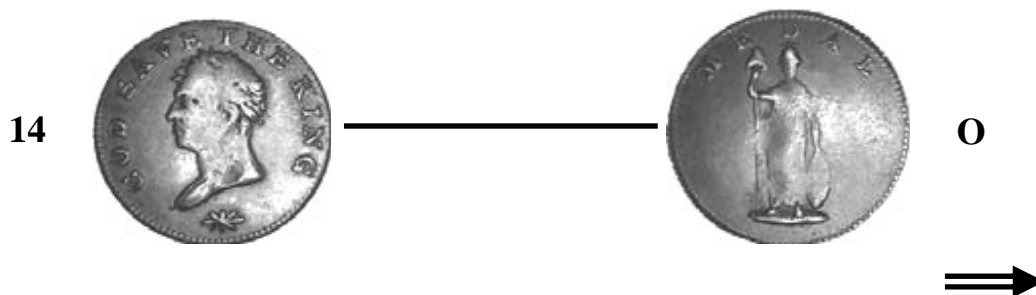
Eighth group, single pair of dies.

Obverse

14 GOD SAVE THE KING Male head left (George IV?).

Reverse

O MEDAL Liberty standing, holding cap on pole and shield at her side.



Quiz
Bob Fritsch, NI #LM134

India and South Asia is a vast area, both geographically and numismatically (is there such a word?). Here are some questions to prime your knowledge of the area.



1. When did India start issuing their own coinage after gaining independence from the British?
2. What is the stylized lion of Myanmar (Burma) called?
3. Which Malay territories comprised the Straits Settlements?
4. When did the coinage of Ceylon end and the coinage of Sri Lanka start?

CONCORDANCE

Withers	Fuld/Kyle	Goode	Rarity
1/A	(24)	O/14	RRR
2/A	20	N/14	C
2/B	(23)	N/2	RR
3/B	3	B/2	C
3/C	22	B/3	RRR
4/C	10	F/3	VC
5/C	11	G/3	VC
6/B	21	C/2	C
6/C	4	C/3	RRR
6/D	9	C/4	S
7/D	5	D/4	VC
8/E	16	K/10	C
8/F	1	K/1	RRR
Geo	IV/F	2	A/1
9/G	12	H/6	C
9/H	13	H/7	S
9/I	14	H/8	C
10/J	15	J/9	RR
10/K	19	J/13	N
11/L	18	M/12	C
12/M	17	L/11	C
13/N	6, 7 and 8	E/5	VC
14/O	—	—	RR

NI

Quiz Answers

1.) 1950. 2.) Chinze (Chinthe). 3.) Singapore, Penang, Malacca. 4.) 1971 and 1972.

When Charles XI Tried to Put His Portrait on a Wismar Coin

Robert Ronus, NI #LM139

WAG (*Westfälische Auktionsgesellschaft*) had a rare gulden of Wismar in their Auction 57 in Dortmund in September 2011 (lot 521). It bears the bust of King Charles XI of Sweden.

Wismar, an old Hanseatic League trading city on the Baltic, first fell into Swedish hands during the Thirty Years' War. Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, intervened on the Protestant side and his troops occupied Wismar in 1632. After the war, the Treaty of Osnabrück (1648) awarded the city to the Swedes. They turned it into one of the biggest fortresses in Europe, a city with 18 bastions and two citadels defended by 700 canons. Sweden's German ambitions came to an end when they were defeated by a coalition led by Russia and Denmark in the Great Northern War (1700-21). The fortifications of Wismar were razed. In 1803 Sweden deeded the city for 100 years to the Duchy of Mecklenburg and then waived all their claims in 1903.

Before the Swedes arrived Wismar had a long history of issuing its own currency as a free Imperial City. Under Sweden the city continued to issue its city coinage with no change in design and no reference to the Swedish occupiers. A typical example is the 1645 Taler illustrated here (Dav. 5945):



Obverse: MONETA.NOVA._WISMARIENSIS. mint mark (D= Johann Dase, mint master 1624-47) Wismar's patron saint, St. Laurence, with halo and palm spray, holding the gridiron on which he was roasted to death; below in the legend a shield with the city arms, a half bull's head and bars divided.

Reverse: FERDINAN.III.D.G.RO.IMP.SEM.AV.16.45 Crowned imperial double eagle with an orb with 32 (schilling) on breast, in circle.

Ironically, Wismar was striking this coin in the name of their nominal ruler, the Catholic Emperor, even when under the control of a Swedish king who was on the Protestant side fighting the Emperor. They would continue to strike coins in the Emperor's name even after 1648 when the city was formally under Swedish sovereignty.

In January 1684 the Swedish Tribunal Assessor Friedrich Klinlow von Friedenschild received a royal concession from Charles XI to strike coins in his name as lord of Wismar. Klinlow built a mint at his own expense.

The coin from the WAG Auction illustrated below was a pattern probably struck at Rostock.



Obverse: CAROLVS.XI REX.SVECIAE. Bust right

Reverse: MONETA.DYNASTIAE.WISMAR. (money of the dynasty of Wismar) 1684*. Wismar city arms (half bull's head and bars divided)

Edge: Plain

Mint: probably Rostock. 40 mm. 22.02 g.

References: AAJ.SB.27. Kunzel 332. KM 17. Grimm 155.

The reference books put Charles' portrait on the reverse but my impression is he would have thought of himself as being on the obverse as Lord of Wismar.

Soon afterwards, in 1685, Klinkow died and the coinage project died with him. The citizens of Wismar felt the issue was an intrusion on their minting rights and objected to the city arms being used on a coin struck in the name of the royal dynasty. The few which had got into circulation were quickly withdrawn so they are now extremely rare.

In all the long years of Swedish rule this gulden remains the only Wismar coin with a royal portrait and title. No other Swedish monarch tried. The half bull's head, half bars city arms and St. Laurence and his gridiron remained supreme.

[Images enlarged]

References:

Ahlström, Bjarne, Yngve Almer, and Kenneth Jonsson. 1980. *Coins of the Swedish Possessions*. Stockholm: Numismatiska Bokförlaget.

Davenport, John S. *German Secular Talers 1600-1700*. 1976. Frankfurt: Numismatischer Verlag P.N. Schulten.

Grimm, Eduard. 1897. *Münzen und Medaillen der Stadt Weimar*. Berlin: A. Weyl.

Kunzel, Michael. 1998. *Die Münzen der Hansestadt Weimar 1359 bis 1854*. Wismar & Berlin.

NI

Syracuse Tetradrachm with Arethusa by Kimon
Numismatica Ars Classica



Numismatica Ars Classica NAC AG, Auction 27, lot 118

Tetradrachm signed by Kimon circa 405-400, AR 16.99 g. Head of Arethusa facing three-quarters l., wearing pearl-shaped pendant and necklace over collier ornamented with pearls; hair flowing in loose tresses; across her forehead, ampyx on which the signature KIMWN. Around three dolphins emerging from curls and a fourth swimming downward; in l. field, SW. Above, outside dotted border, ΑΡΕΘΟΥΣΑ. Rev. ΣΥΡΑΚ – ΟΣΙΩΝ Fast quadriga driven l. by chiton-clad charioteer, holding kentron and reins; above, Nike floating r., holding wreath to crown the charioteer. Beneath the two further horses, an overset column (meta); in exergue, ear of barley l. Rizzo pl. XLVIII, 11 (these dies). SNG ANS 288 (these dies). Dewing 846 (these dies). AMB 473 (this reverse die). H. Cahn, *Arethusa Soteira*, in *Essays Carson-Jenkins*, 1 (this obverse die). Ognina hoard, SNR 57, 1978, pl. 31, 298 (these dies). Tudeer 81.

Extremely rare and in exceptional condition for the issue. An enchanting portrait by the most celebrated master die engraver in sublime Classical style, struck on a full flan with an almost invisible trace of double striking on reverse, otherwise good extremely fine.

Certainly among the most influential coinages of the ancient Greeks, this set of dies rank among Kimon's finest. The obverse offers an arresting portrait of the nymph Arethusa, whose placid countenance is a foil to the hive of activity that surrounds it (and to the energetic scene on the reverse). First to catch the viewer's attention is Arethusa's hair, which flows wildly in all directions, though not to the detriment of her appeal; indeed, the fact that it flows back permits an unobstructed view of her beauty. Four dolphins artfully intertwine with the strands of Arethusa's hair: one at the right is shown in full, one at the left is nearly full, and only the faces of the remaining two are shown, one at each side. Kimon imparts a "playful quality" to these dolphins—a naturalistic triumph considering that is one of the most endearing features of these sea mammals. Even the dotted border is of interest, as it restrains the expansive power of Arethusa's image. Perhaps most masterful of all, though, is how

Kimón incorporates three inscriptions into the design. His signature appears on the ampyx that restrains the nymph's hair; her name, Arethusa, is creatively placed at the top outside the border; and an abbreviation for "saviour" is so cleverly hidden among the dolphins and the strands of hair at the left that it was not acknowledged until very recently (H. A. Cahn, "Arethusa Soteira", Essays in honour of Robert Carson and Kenneth Jenkins, 1993, pp. 5-6). The reverse is equally masterful: here we observe a quadriga in high action, viewed at a slight angle, which allowed the artist to demonstrate his ability to convey perspective. Here, it would seem, we have a momentary snapshot of a victorious team after the meta: the driver, with his firm grip on the reins and his command of the goad, is restraining the horses, which rear up and toss their heads in all directions. Clearly Kimón captured a moment when a driver performs an unconventional, but masterful action that catches his team by surprise, yet, was necessary to secure a victory, as symbolised by the crowning of the driver by Nike. We may note that the border is a thin, solid line that does not distract us from the powerful scene; Kimón even delights in allowing the hoofs of the lead horse to break through the border. The combination of the obverse depicting "Arethusa the Savior" and the reverse dedicated to a victorious charioteer, and the remarkable quality of the dies, earmarks this as a commemorative issue. As such, it has been associated with historical events, principally the defeat of the Athenian fleet at Syracuse in 413 B. C. and, perhaps more likely, the good fate of the Syracusans in the otherwise devastating invasion of Sicily by the Carthaginians from 406 to 405 BC.

[Image not actual size]

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Syracuse Litra with Arethusa
Numismatica Ars Classica



Numismatica Ars Classica NAC AG, Auction 27, lot 114

Litra circa 460-450, AR 0.67 g. SURA Pearl-diademed head of Arethusa r. Rev. Octopus. SNG ANS 138. Cf. Boehringer 467. Diameter 13 mm.

NI

Book News and Reviews

Les contremarques au tigre sur les monnaies napoléoniennes

In: Revue numismatique, 6e série - Tome 160, année 2004 pp. 343-358.

Greg Brunk's excellent series "Coins Countermarked with Political Messages and Related Pieces" published within the pages of this magazine (*NI Bulletin*) include a section on French countermarks identified as "Owl's Head Fantasies" applied to Napoleonic 5 franc and 2 franc coins (*Numismatics International Bulletin* Vol. 44, Nos. 11/12, November-December 2009). This series was submitted long before publication as we are serializing it over many editions of the magazine.

While Brunk's assessment was ...*They probably are fantasies made for the coin collector's market during the late 19th or early 20th century, although it is at least possible they were sold as souvenirs by local jewelers in one of the Western provinces...* he recognized other interpretations ... *Others interpret the countermark as the head of a cat with bug-eyes. A recent auction stated that it is a caged tiger, allegedly symbolizing Napoleon's forced exile on the island of Elba. Nevertheless, the most common identification is the owl's head...*and concluded with a call for further information ...*Does any reader have further information?*

As it happens I came upon the article in the title of this review which discusses these very same countermarks and arrives at the conclusion that the countermarks are not fantasies at all, but were political statements of *execratio* (accursing) made contemporaneously with end of Napoleon's rule, in 1815, possibly even before the St Helena exile.

En somme, il nous semble avoir démontré - et pour de bon - qu'il ne s'agissait ni d'une chouette ni d'une fantaisie. Cette contremarque au tigre, accompagnée de son coup de poinçon aveuglant, est une manifestation d'exécration à la personne de l'empereur dont la vraie nature est ainsi stigmatisée. Elle a été apposée en 1815, peut-être même dès avant l'exil à Sainte-Hélène. Ce contremarquage, pratiqué sur une large échelle sans qu'il soit nécessaire de lui reconnaître une forme d'officialité, peut avoir été produit aussi bien sur le territoire français (actuel) qu'à l'extérieur.

"Official" article abstract:

Several Napoleonic coins were overstruck with what present-day numismatists generally call an owl's head. This was thought to be a product of modern fantasy applied to the coins a century or so after the Napoleonic period. Forty-seven specimens have been collected. These show beyond any doubt that this was no late fantasy, but rather a mark of *execratio* made in 1815 which referred to Napoleon the Tiger (now confined in a cage). There is no connection here with the Chouans of Vendée as it is claimed in some recent catalogues.

de Callatay François, Forestier Jean-Baptiste. "Les contremarques au tigre sur les monnaies napoléoniennes." In: *Revue numismatique, 6e série - Tome 160*, année 2004 pp. 343-358.

doi : 10.3406/numi.2004.2564

http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/numi_0484-8942_2004_num_6_160_2564

The images below are snippets from the article.

Les poinçons mis en œuvre : P 1-P 4



P 1 : Leu, 51, ex. 1109



P 2 : Albuquerque, mars 1996



P 3 : Bruxelles, coll. Surmont



P 4 : Leu, 51, 1412

Images of two coins with both the tiger countermark and the blinded eyes

The authors argue that while the animal punch with teeth and whiskers may make for a “funny” tiger or cat it is certainly not an owl. The Milan specimen (P 4) is an exception to the blinded eyes consistent with the other examples.



P 1 : Leu, 51,
ex. 1109



P 2 : Burgan, 25,
793



P 3 : Bruxelles,
BRB, Surmont



P 4 : Leu, 51,
1412



P 1 : Vinchon,
liste 18, 590



P 2 : Albuquerque,
59, 71



P 3 : Vinchon,
déc. 1999, 498

Images of the tiger countermark clearing showing a toothed animal

When it comes to dating the countermark the authors argue against late 19th century and cite two references to the 1840s (1843 & 1844) and expect there may be even earlier citations.



The Unmasked Tyrant

La gravure Le tyran démasqué de Jean-Baptiste Gauthier (dépôt légal du 9 août 1815) montre l'Empereur démasqué par une allégorie de la France (monarchiste). La notice précise : « La duplicité et la monstruosité de Napoléon sont révélées au pays par la Monarchie légitime. Une France royaliste, ... arrache, grâce à un flambeau, le masque de tigre dont se protège l'Empereur » (C. Clerc, 1985, p. 259, n° 131).

Text translation: The etching *unmasked tyrant* by Jean-Baptiste Gauthier ... shows the Emperor unmasked by an allegory of France (monarchist). The notice states: “The duplicity and monstrosity of Napoleon proved to the country by the legitimate monarchy. A royalist France ... strips, with a torch, the tiger mask which protects the Emperor “

If you are interested in French coins, the French Revolution or Napoleon this article is well worth the effort to locate and read. I don't read French but with the aid of Google translation it wasn't too much work to make my way through it.

Reviewed by Herman Blanton

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Library Report

David Gracey

The following books have been donated to the NI Library. These and other books in the NI Library may be borrowed by any NI member for the cost of postage and insurance.

BB60.ImfF:1964:ACI

Imhoff-Blumer, F. W. and Percy Gardner
Ancient coins illustrating lost masterpieces of
Greek art
pub 1964, 176pp w/plates

JB85.SelG:2008:GM

Selgin, George
Good money; Birmingham button makers, the Royal Mint,
and the beginnings of modern coinage, 1775-1821
pub 2008, 345pp, illus

UA30.BerY:1973:SPM

Beresiner, Yasha and Colin Narbeth
The story of paper money
pub 1973, 112 pp, illus

US25.TomM:nd:SW

Tomasko, Mark D.
Security for the world; two hundred years of American
Bank Note Company
19 pp, illus

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... from page 137

We also offer you a review on an article concerning the “Owl Counterstamps” on Napoleonic coins but as the authors contend these counterstamps are “Tigers.” I found this article particularly intriguing. Another mystery to me is the inscription MONETA NOVA and other similar such inscriptions. This is a common inscription but I’ve not a satisfactory understanding of its significance. There must be a solid basis for using this inscription on so many coins.

Robert Ronus writes about a Wismar pattern coin of Charles XI of Sweden.

Finally, we have two articles courtesy of Numismatica Ars Classica on ancient coins of Syracuse featuring Arethusa.

I hope you enjoy all of these offerings.

Herman Blanton

Moneta Nova

Herman Blanton, LM #115

Over the years I've encountered numerous different coins with the inscription "MONETA NOVA" as well as some variants on moneta. Curiosity causes me to ponder the what and why of this text. The space available on coins is by necessity quite limited, especially on those coins coming from the middle ages. This inscription continued beyond the middle ages into the early modern and modern era. For an illustration of just one such specimen see Robert Ronus's article "When Charles XI Tried to Put His Portrait on a Wismar Coin" in this magazine where there is a taler with the inscription "MONETA • NOVA • WISMARIENSIS" which means "New Money (of) Wismar."

There are many other examples such as the three below from the Russian website *The Money Museum* (<http://muzeydeneg.ru>): <http://muzeydeneg.ru/eng/?p=550>

MONETA NOVA CIVITATIS HAMBURGENSIS: new coin of the city of Hamburg.

MONETA NOVA ARG: new silver coin.

MONETA NOVA CVPRE: new copper coin.

MONETA NOVA REVAL(iensis): new coin of Revala [county] (today Tallinn Estonia)

When searching the "what" and "why" of *moneta nova* I was surprised at how difficult it is to find a satisfying answer. Either the term is self explanatory (except to me) or the easily found explanations are not thorough enough to stand on their own. Albert Frey (Frey: 153) recognized it as "*A common expression on European continental coins, to denote a new coinage, which in many instances was only made possible by melting the coins previously in use.*" His definition is widely disseminated on internet but is not satisfying to me as it does not speak to *why*.

I managed to find an essay which by our contemporary standards of political correctness and cultural sensitivity is at places shall I say "out of date" it includes a suitable answer as to why the expression *moneta nova* was used. In short, the writer says that the expression *moneta nova* was used as a mark of integrity. You can find the article "*On the Disappearance of Coinages, and the Uses other than as a Circulating Medium, of Coined Money*" reprinted elsewhere in this magazine.

I trust there must be other even more suitable explanations published on this. If you can contribute to this topic please contact me (the editor), especially if it is available for publication within these pages.

Frey, Albert R. 1917. "A Dictionary of Numismatic Names, Their Official and Popular Designations" in *American Journal of Numismatics 1916 Volume L*. New York: American Numismatic Society.

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Essay: On the Disappearance of Coinages, and the Uses, other than as a Circulating Medium, of Coined Money. Part 1.

Reprinted from the *American Journal of Numismatics and Bulletin of the American Numismatic & Archaeological Society*. Vol. III, No. 10. New York. February 1869.

“Money makes the Mare go”, observed some old-time, Sancho-Panziatically spoken, worthy; whose body and bones are long ago returned to their primeval dust and lime; and the world, with that strange love for jingling phrases which has often been remarked, has preserved and handed down to posterity this hardly Solomonian proverb. Why? Because it is witty? Because it is, apposite? Because it is “multum in parvo”? Not at all; but simply because it is alliterative. Because three words of its five commence with M; and for this reason it has reached us in company with “Dickery Dickery Dock”, “Goosey Goosey Gander”, “Peter Piper”, “When the Wine is in the Wit is out”, “Fair Face False Heart”, and the thousand other alliterative Anglo-Saxon-descended proverbs and nursery rhymes with which our infantile wailing of disgust at the world are beguiled to silence, and our more matured love for concisely stated Truisms (since we are all more or less “Samivel Wellers” in that respect) nourished and fostered. But I am wandering from my Text ere I commence my discourse, and must resume the “even tenor of my way”, merely referring those who are curious as to the effect of alliteration to the old English Metrical Romances, “Piers Plowman”, etc.; or, if they have no taste for Ancient Poetry, in which case their numismatic devotion shall not be a bar to their being read out of the circle of true Antiquarianism, to the gorgeously colored “Atalanta in Calydon” of Swinburne. But, to return to our mutton:—”Money makes the Mare go”; and, as the late Marquis of Hastings might have remarked, “Mares make Money go”. But what else makes Money go? Why does so much coin go out of existence? Why, with all the coin that has been cast, hammered, struck, or otherwise minted, since the period of the first coined money, is there still such a comparative scarcity of the circulating medium? Why is the circulation composed entirely of *new* pieces of money; and why of the Hundreds of Thousands of Coinages of different types, which have seen the light since the Darics with their Sagittarian types were the “Moneta Nova” of their time, does only a carefully-hoarded unique, in some cabinet, representing the entire known balance of the profuse coinage of some once world-wide-feared conqueror, or a handful of half-obliterated treasures scattered in the Numismatic cabinets of the world, and hoarded as all that remains of the money which thousands of long forgotten men and women toiled, and fought, and killed, and suffered shame for a thousand years ago, even as we do this day, remain to tell the story of the art, the history, and the forgotten tongue of those forgotten days? What becomes of the coin?—seems at first sight to be a question as difficult to solve as: What becomes of the pins?—which happily has been set at rest by the Parisian Sewer Commissioners; or Mr Weller’s still unanswered one of “What becomes of the dead donkeys”? And yet with very little consideration the answers will become obvious.

When we think of the recoinages of whole kingdoms’ circulating currency, so often repeated; of the over or under valuation of a coinage alike driving it out of circulation, by systematic refusals to receive it in the former case, or its being melted for the premium in the latter; when we think of the Roman Senate ordering all the coins of a Caligula to be destroyed; or a Helvetic Council making a clean sweep of the heterogeneous coinages for centuries of the Cantons, to clear the path for the

Federal coins; of such great recoinages as those in England, by Edward VI. and Elizabeth, and the consequent revaluation of the Base Money of Henry VIII. at a rate even below its small intrinsic value; of the melting down and recoinage of money, which has taken place in a hundred conquered countries, so that the Sobieski or Stanislaus groat, or the Indian Hieroglyphical Fanam, Toman, or Mohur, of some Tippoo Sahib of to day, comes forth to-morrow with the bloody-beaked and clawed eagle of the Imperial-Kingly Hapsburgh, or the Czar of all the Russias, in the one case, or the idiotic face of “Georgius Tertius”, or the fair matronly bust of Victoria the well-beloved with the simple title of “Queen”—instead of some oriental “King of Kings”, “Lord of the White Elephant”, “Brother of the Sun”, and “Monarch of the Five Hundred Green Umbrellas”, in the other—when we think over all these things, these coinages and recoinages, meltings and recreations into coin, repeated times nearly innumerable, so that we can almost imagine in the silver dollar which yesterday formed one of those which bought the southern slave his freedom, one of the forty pieces of silver, and see in one of the “Fifteen livres of Beaumarchais” the remains of one of the pounds for which those traitors, unexampled in history, sold the Royal Martyr, whose whole regret was, as expressed in his ΕΙΚΩΝ ΒΑΣΙΑΙΚΗ: “that his price was higher than his Savior’s”; we can readily see that a great part of the old coinage has been remelted and recoinage, and that the amount of old coin in circulation could not under such circumstances be very great, even if no other destructive influences were at work. There is a sort of Pythagorean Transmigration of types, which are the souls of coins as the metal is their bodies. The coin exists its little space, and then going into the seven-times-heated furnace, comes forth brighter and newer for the affliction: typical of our life, our death and our resurrection.

The wear and tear of circulation is also a great agent in the destruction of coins. The universal practice of the petty sovereigns of the Middle Ages, particularly in Central Europe, of alloying the coins to just such an extent as their sovereign pleasure or pecuniary necessities demanded, led to the almost universal refusal of a sovereign’s coins after his decease, when these “legal-tender acts” became inutile and invalid. For this reason we find almost all the mediaeval coins bear the legend “*Moneta Nova*”, “*New Money*”, of this, that, or the other principality, to persuade the takers of its purity and novelty. This alloying was carried to such an extent that, at last, the Bracteate coins came into use, according to Ludewig, to obviate the evil. They were too thin to be plated as the solidi too often were; and as they were struck—according to the best authorities—with wooden dies, they were necessarily of pure and even metal. The fragility of this coinage caused their easy destruction, and accounts for the small number of specimens which are in existence. The ancient coins, not having any outer-raised circle, milled edges, or any protection of that kind, except some such apology for one as the extension of the cross to the outer circle on Henry III.’s second coinage, wore so much the more quickly, and afforded a splendid field for the energies of those mathematicians who, by clipping, sweating, boring holes longitudinally, and filling with solder, splitting, and extracting the middle, etc., of coins, solve the difficult problem of “how to take a half dollar from a dollar and have a dollar left”. Neither shape, nor form of legend seems to make much difference in the wear of coins. The high Relievo, or Relievo in Intaglio of the ancient coins, the sunken intaglio letters of the George Penny, or Liberia cent, or the queer “criss-cross” Belgian pattern, all alike must give way, and become illegible under the million times repeated eager human grasp. Shape secures them very little. It is true that when we find a piece of money such as the Charles’ Siege-Pieces, or the octagons, squares,

ovals, etc., of the German medieval coinage, such as the Austrian gold ducats, etc., or the Augsburg *Scheide Münze*, they are generally in good preservation; but this is easily accounted for by the fact that almost any person would keep or lay aside such pieces, and so it has been their fortune to be preserved from the rubs and scratches and other ills which circulating coins are heirs to. In the absence of any reports from the Chinese or Japanese Comptrollers of Currency, or the Siamese Chief of the Mint, we cannot compare the wear and tear suffered by the oblong silver and oval gold coins of our Antipodean neighbors, the Japs, or the bullet-shaped Ticals of the Siamese, with that which our more civilized (?) coins undergo.

Speaking of China, we think instinctively of another source of destruction of one coinage, although but of one type. The brothers of the celestial bodies, though, it would seem, destitute of a Silver Coinage of their own, do not scruple to take and make away with all the Mexican dollars so called (more correctly Pesos, or pieces of 8), that they can “trade in”. For years, the surplus silver of all Christendom, coined into these pieces, has flowed Orient-ward; and none of it ever comes back, except now and then a few dollars, deeply stamped with Mr. John Chinaman’s queer and yet familiar characters. The same thing, it seems takes place with the Maria Theresa dollar, called the “Levantine Dollar”, which is the only current silver European coin in Abyssinia; and which, we find by the war record, was coined by the Austrian Government for the British troops, during the war in that country, from the original dies.

A great deal of coined money has been melted down to evade laws against the exportation of coin, in different countries, or for use in the arts in all departments.

A source of destruction, little counted on, and yet enormous in the aggregate, is the amount hidden by those who either forgot, never revisited, or were severed by death from their *cache*. Every day we hear of some discovery of coins, which were hidden by those who never disinterred their hoard.

The discoveries of ancient Roman and Greek coins, all over Europe, Asia, and Northern Africa, have brought to light, it is safe to say, MILLIONS of corroded and, numismatically, worthless copper or *aes* coins, with a sprinkling of more legible ones, and a smaller proportion of Gold and Silver. Of course what is found is but a tithe of what was hidden and is lost. The Roman armies buried their money before entering an enemy’s country, and many a legionary never came back to unearth his deposit. Akin in its interest is the thought of the treasures of minted money which have been lost and sunk beneath the sea. Ocean’s floor is strewn with wrecks, and every coin, of every nation, from the Palmated Carthaginian to the Spanish Doubloon finds a representative among the wealth which lies in the salt ooze on the bottom of the sea.

The subject we have chosen is exhaustless, but our space and time are limited; and so, as this is no scientific treatise, but merely a few random thoughts committed to paper, we will close for the present the first branch of our subject, promising ere long to “offend again”, by continuing the second branch, and detailing a few of the uses, or rather abuses, to which coined money is subject, and which tend to deface, destroy, or annihilate the currencies of our own days.

DLW [David Leon Walter]